

This guide is designed as a workbook to enable HR professionals and management team members to deliver employee feedback and take part in the Action Planning process.

The Insightlink 4Cs

Employee Survey Feedback and Action Planning Workbook



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About This Workbook

The Insightlink 4Cs Employee Survey Feedback and Action Planning Workbook is designed to help you transform the results of your employee opinion survey (EOS) – also known as employee engagement or climate surveys – into useful and effective strategic plans.

Research has shown that, after an employee survey has been conducted, employees are much more interested in seeing action taken than they are in seeing the results of the survey. Employee surveys have little or no value if nothing is done to make improvements. This is why successful Action Planning is a critical component of successful employee surveys.

You will receive practical guides, tips, and forms to help you navigate, understand, and take action on your employee survey results. This workbook will help you to:

- Identify the key strengths of your organization.
- Identify the primary areas for improvement.
- Set short-, medium- and longer-term goals to address those areas of improvement.
- Facilitate sessions to share survey results with employees and solicit employee suggestions and feedback on how to improve areas of concerns.
- Prioritize key action items and identify key stakeholders who will be accountable for rolling out each of these actions.
- Develop Action Plans that are tailored to the specific needs of your organization.
- Identify realistic timeframes for implementing each item in your Action Plan.
- Implement a communication strategy to keep employees updated amidst the changes being introduced as a result of your Employment Survey.
- Develop metrics to measure progress as your Action Plan is implemented.

By taking these steps, your organization will start to share in the benefits that come from having a motivated and engaged employee workforce.

Objective

The two most critical phases of the Employee Opinion Survey (EOS) process happen after you have conducted your survey and received your survey report. Once you've reviewed the survey results and identified your organization's primary areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement, you need to communicate the survey results to your employees ("Survey Results Feedback") and decide what to do next ("Action Planning").

It is during these two steps that employees will judge the value of the organization's leadership, how well employees' voices are being heard in terms of improving their work life experience and the strength of management's commitment to continuous improvement.

Research has shown that, after an employee survey, employees are much more interested in seeing action taken than they are in seeing the results of the survey. Although it is important to share the highlights of the survey with your workforce, employee surveys have little or no value if nothing is done to make improvements in the organization. This is why successful Action Planning is a critical component of successful employee surveys.

The Insightlink 4Cs Workbook is designed to help you navigate through your employee survey results, communicate the results to your employees in an effective way, facilitate Action Planning with the employees and stakeholders who are responsible for creating change within your organization, implement your Action Plan effectively and then monitor its progress.

Your EOS results represent an important starting point for follow-up Action Planning and should be used as a way of structuring the interaction with your employees. However, since the survey results are not able to fully depict the underlying causes of the results, Action Planning needs to take the form of discussions between managers and employees so that opportunities for improvement can be determined and potential solutions can be identified. Acting upon these opportunities and solutions through new initiatives and changes to the organization will help to enhance the working environment for employees while also strengthening their relationship with the organization.

How to Use this Workbook

This workbook is designed as a guide to help you throughout the Survey Results Feedback and Action Planning process. Feel free to read it in a sequential order or jump to the chapter that you are working on. The worksheets are designed for use with your team, so feel free to make copies of them as required. If you prefer, request the separate "form fillable" file that contains the worksheets which you can share with all applicable colleagues.

Employee Satisfaction: An Introduction

We believe that the overall level of employee satisfaction is the most critical measure of any employee survey, since it encapsulates what is important to your employees and how they feel about their jobs.

Employees' overall satisfaction with their jobs is affected by a number of factors, including their relationships with coworkers, managers and/or supervisors, their impressions of senior leadership, their ongoing work activities, the availability of resources to do their jobs well, the perceived effectiveness of communications, the career enhancement and advancement opportunities available to them and how equitable they perceive the organization's pay policies to be.

In essence, an employee satisfaction score reflects the more immediate impact of their day-to-day work environment and relationships with coworkers and managers on employees' state of being. In contrast, employee commitment or engagement reflects employees' desire to work for an organization over the longer-term and their willingness to go "above and beyond" the call of duty to help their organization succeed. However, dissatisfaction with their work environment can often subvert their sense of commitment, which leads to employee turnover.

In an ideal situation, you want to have both highly satisfied and highly committed employees. However, in reality, our studies have shown that employees are often highly committed to the organization where they work but they are not as highly satisfied with their jobs. Solving the puzzle of what contributes to employee satisfaction is the first step toward building an engaged workforce.

Extensive research shows that committed and satisfied employees have a direct impact on an organization's performance and profitability. Specifically, organizations that have more committed and satisfied employees are more likely to have:

- Lower employee turnover.
- Better recruiting efforts as they have a larger pool of candidates to choose from.
- Greater operational efficiency and improved employee productivity.
- Higher customer satisfaction scores.
- Better financial returns and improved financial performance.

Based on Insightlink's 4Cs Employee Benchmark Norms, just slightly more than one-half of all employees in the U.S. are extremely or very satisfied with their jobs. This means that, across all organizations, there is substantial room for improvement in employee satisfaction. The good news, though, is that a concerted and organized Action Plan based on concrete EOS results can lead to substantial improvements in employee satisfaction over a relatively short time frame. In fact Insightlink clients achieve an average +7 percentage points increase in overall satisfaction between studies. This means that all organizations have the opportunity to share in the benefits that come from having a satisfied and committed workforce.

The 4Cs of Employee Satisfaction

Insightlink's Employee Survey Feedback and Action Planning Workbook is built around each of the critical 4Cs of employee satisfaction: **Commitment**, **Culture**, **Communications** and **Compensation**. Together, these factors represent the key drivers of employee satisfaction.

Commitment

The concept of commitment includes commitment from employees toward their organization (employee commitment) and the perceived commitment from the organization toward employees (organizational commitment).

"Employee commitment" measures how likely employees are to continue working for your organization, to go above and beyond their call of duty to help your organization succeed and to feel motivated to work to the best of their ability. Committed employees are more likely to believe that working at your organization is more than just a job and they get a strong sense of personal accomplishment at their jobs. Even employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs can feel a sense of commitment to the organization where they work. However, true engagement requires both satisfaction and commitment from employees.

"Organizational commitment", on the other hand, measures employees' perceived commitment from the organization. Organizational commitment toward employees comes from how likely they are to argue that they have sufficient training and resources to perform their jobs to the best of their ability and to have opportunities to learn new skills at their jobs.

Culture

Organizational culture is the set of common understandings and unspoken rules of how employees interact with each other. An organization's culture – whether positive or negative – is usually created and fostered by its senior management. Through their articulation of the organization's vision, goals, and core values, senior management establish organizational values, which represent preferences for certain behaviors or certain outcomes, and organizational norms, which are culturally acceptable ways of pursuing goals and behaviors.

Senior leaders set the tone by their own behavior that then cascades down to the rest of the organization. For example, if senior leaders support employee recognition and regularly acknowledge employees' contributions, other managers and employees will follow suit and feel comfortable acknowledging employees' good work. On the other hand, if senior management are not seen as supporting accountability and fairness throughout the organization, employees are likely to believe that favoritism is rampant and that promotions are based on personal connections rather than merit. Therefore, it is critically important that senior leaders model the desired behavior they want from their employees since such behavior usually defines the culture of the organization, whether senior leaders realize it or not.

For the purposes of organizational development and performance, it is important to cultivate an organizational culture that is aligned with the organization's business goals. For example, an organization that values innovation will encourage employees to experiment and treat mistakes as learning opportunities rather than penalizing employees for making mistakes.

Communications

Effective corporate communications is often the foundation upon which an organization's operations, processes and HR initiatives run smoothly. Ideally, organizational communication should be a two-way vertical and horizontal process through which information, ideas and solutions to daily challenges flow between employees and management, and across departments and teams. However, employees often feel that their attitudes and opinions are not considered when management makes changes to policies and procedures, which are often announced arbitrarily or discovered only through the "grapevine."

At the most basic level, employees need to know what is expected of them at work. At a higher level, employees need to know where the organization is headed and how their day-to-day activities contribute to achieving the organization's overall goals. Meanwhile, organizations are increasingly relying on cross-functional teams to serve client needs, and this requires better cross-departmental or cross-functional communications to keep everyone on the team informed. For example, sales associates need to know what new products and services are available to serve customers' specific needs. This requires effective communications between Sales and Product Development or Marketing. In addition, bottom-up communications from employees to managers and senior management are equally important. Management needs to create a work environment where employees are not afraid to speak up when they have questions or suggestions. Management must also take employee opinions and suggestions into account when making decisions and avoid the impression that employee thoughts "just don't count."

Compensation

Many studies have shown that, although offering fair and competitive compensation is critical to retaining employees, it is a "hygiene factor"¹ in maintaining employee satisfaction. This means that paying employees much more than the prevailing market may not necessarily result in higher satisfaction with pay or increased job satisfaction.

Nonetheless, employees' satisfaction with pay can be increased by educating employees about how they are paid and by maintaining transparent compensation policy and practices, including having clear and achievable pay for performance policies. Having a good understanding of how they are paid helps employees know what they can do to improve their compensation and improves employees' perceived fairness and equity of their pay. Overall, a sense of fairness and equity in pay has a greater impact on employees' satisfaction with pay than does the absolute amount of pay alone.

In general, employees' satisfaction with their compensation tends to be lower than their satisfaction with other aspects of their work. For this reason, management should not be overly alarmed if their compensation satisfaction score is low. However, if it is significantly below the industry or U.S. norms, then action needs to be taken to address the reasons that are contributing to employees' low satisfaction with their compensation.

As a leader or a HR professional at your organization, you can help improve employees' perceptions of fair and equitable pay by conducting regular salary benchmarking studies to ensure that your pay policies are competitive. It is also important for organizations to emphasize the value of its total compensation, including benefits, employee rewards and the work environment as well as salaries and bonuses, since this will help raise employees' awareness of what they receive for working at your organization in addition to their pay.

¹Frederick Herzberg coined the terms "hygiene factors" and "motivators" to describe factors that impact employee satisfaction. Hygiene factors are maintenance factors that are required in adequate amounts to avoid employee dissatisfaction, but do not necessarily lead to greater employee satisfaction if increased. Hygiene factors are mostly related to the work environment, such as organizational policies, working conditions, pay, relationships with managers and coworkers, and job security. In contrast, motivators include such factors as recognition, sense of achievement, responsibility, advancement, and the work itself, which reflect the psychological need to grow and achieve. Motivators can have a disproportionate influence on job satisfaction, both positively and negatively.

The Loyalty Matrix

Insightlink's Loyalty Matrix divides employees into four distinct segments using a calculation based on their overall job satisfaction and their anticipated tenure with your organization.

Committed Loyalists are those employees who are satisfied working at your organization and plan to stay for two years or more. Clearly, you want to maximize the proportion of Committed Loyalists because of the strong contribution they make to the morale, productivity and overall success of your organization. Therefore, Insightlink recommends that companies should strive to have at least 55% of Committed Loyalists in their organizations.

Satisfied Opportunists are the employees who plan to leave your organization even though they are satisfied with their jobs. These tend to be people who are always on the lookout for new opportunities and, ideally, should not represent more than 5% of your employees.

Change Seekers represent the employees who are not satisfied working at your organization and plan to leave within the next two years. Together, the proportions of Satisfied Opportunists and Change Seekers indicate the risk of short-term employee turnover at your organization.

Finally, **Dissatisfied Compromisers** are the employees who are not satisfied working at your organization but still plan to stay for the longer term. Dissatisfied Compromisers are likely to drain your organization of resources and to decrease employee morale. Because of this, it is critical that you take steps to address the concerns of Dissatisfied Compromisers and move some of them into becoming Committed Loyalists of your workforce.

U.S. Overall



Our experience demonstrates that if an organization manages the 4Cs well, it is possible to reduce the proportion of Change Seekers. This has important bottom line implications as it can cost an organization as much as 1½ times an annual salary to replace an employee, not to mention the loss of institutional knowledge and social assets built up by the departing employees.

Although organizations can do little to control the proportion of Satisfied Opportunists, as there will always be employees who take an opportunistic approach to their career management, it is important to monitor the proportion of Satisfied Opportunists. Similarly, organizations should strive to keep the proportion of Dissatisfied Compromisers to less than 25% to minimize their impact on the organization. The rest of this Workbook is designed to give you the tools to shift as many employees as possible into becoming Committed Loyalists.

Step 1: Employee Survey Results Review through the 4Cs Framework

Human Resources and senior management should thoroughly review the EOS Report to get an overall understanding of the results and the areas of improvement identified by the EOS findings. After this, senior management and/or HR can start the conversation of how best to share the survey results with employees.

Objectives

The key objectives for reviewing the EOS results in detail are to:

- Understand the overall level of satisfaction within the organization (and by individual department/unit/group if appropriate).
- Identify the major trends that are impacting the level of satisfaction.
- Summarize the findings that need further exploration or discussion with employees as well as the findings that may not be appropriate to share with all employees.

Understanding Survey Results

Use Worksheet #1 to help you understand your employee survey results through the 4Cs framework. Here are key points you want to track as you review the survey results:

Identify Key Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do certain topics or issues seem to come up frequently? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High satisfaction with coworkers or the work itself. • High satisfaction with organization-provided benefits. • A lack of employee recognition. • A lack of competitiveness or fairness in pay. • Ineffective communications between departments.
Leverage Current Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the top 5 items with the highest scores overall? • What are the top 5 items with the highest scores within each of the 4Cs? • Which items have the highest scores compared to the industry norms? • If applicable, what items or dimensions have improved most from your last survey?
Identify Quick Fixes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any “quick fixes” that you can implement right away? (e.g., add more chairs in the employees’ lunch room, add more lights in the parking lot, update the employee email list). These small changes can have an immediate impact on employee morale.
Identify Opportunities for Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of the Insightlink 4Cs have the most items with the lowest scores? • Which items have the lowest scores compared to industry norms ratings? • If applicable, what items or dimensions have lower scores or did not change from the last survey?
Evaluate the Impact of Recent Organizational Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the results, are there any findings that were really not expected? • Are there other surprises or concerns? • What recent changes in the organization might impact the Action Planning process?

Tips for Analyzing Quantitative Data

When analyzing your quantitative EOS results, look for the general patterns and trends and take note of consistencies (i.e., are the issues raised in the open-ended comments also corroborated in the quantitative results?). A good starting point for your analysis is the overall level of job satisfaction at your organization, since this single score will influence many other measures.

To help with this analysis, most of the findings in Insightlink 4Cs reports include the “top two box” scores for each five-point scale. The “top two box” summary is a useful measure when analyzing and comparing findings across a substantial amount of data.

It is extremely important that you remain objective when reviewing your results and avoid analyzing them “defensively.” In other words, don’t try to “explain” the negative findings away. Also, use the U.S. and industry norms judiciously and remember that norms are simply “averages,” not guidelines, but are useful for giving context. Finally, record both the strengths *and* the weaknesses of your organization. In addition to addressing the weaknesses, you also need to acknowledge, celebrate and maintain the strengths.

Tips for Analyzing Open-Ended Responses

While open-ended questions provide an opportunity for self-expression, the analysis of such questions is difficult. However, open-ended responses can really help you understand the quantitative results.

When reviewing the comments made by your employees through the survey, it is important to look for consistent themes and to pay attention to the ideas and comments that are repeated, rather than focusing on the outrageous “extreme” or “outlier” comments. Watch for good suggestions and specifics to help you better understand your opportunities for improvement. Finally, never try to guess the author of a comment or use comments for reprisals – all employees comments are and must remain anonymous.

Summarize the Findings for Employees

After you’ve digested the survey results using the guide on the previous page, there are two important steps you should take to summarize the findings for your employees:

- Shortly after receiving the full EOS report, prepare and distribute a short “memo” or article in your company newsletter to thank employees for their participation and to give them a very brief summary of the results. An example of such a memo is included as Appendix A of this workbook.
- Prepare a Highlight Summary Report that can be shared with all employees and used in all employee debriefing meetings. Generally, it is important to include both the primary strengths and weaknesses of the organization as identified by the EOS report, while also keeping the Highlight Summary Report fairly short. In our experience, employees tend to be more interested in what actions will be implemented as a result of the study than in the specific findings themselves.

In larger organizations, it might also be useful to create Highlight Summary Report for each major department or functional unit.

Worksheet #1: Employee Survey Results Review through the 4Cs Framework

Organization Name _____ Department/Unit Name _____

Please use data from your employee survey report as a guide to answer the following questions:

Overall Employee Satisfaction and Loyalty Assessment

What is your overall employee satisfaction score? (Record your "top 2 box" scores)	_____% _____% _____% _____% This Yr Prior Yr Prior Yr Ind. Norm																									
What is your overall business environment and how has your organization changed in the past 12 months?																										
What is your Loyalty Matrix?	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Committed Loyalists</i></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Satisfied Opportunists</i></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Change Seekers</i></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><i>Dissatisfied Compromisers</i></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">_____%</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">This Yr</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Prior Yr</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Prior Yr</td> <td style="padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Ind. Norm</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Committed Loyalists</i>	_____%	_____%	_____%	_____%	<i>Satisfied Opportunists</i>	_____%	_____%	_____%	_____%	<i>Change Seekers</i>	_____%	_____%	_____%	_____%	<i>Dissatisfied Compromisers</i>	_____%	_____%	_____%	_____%		This Yr	Prior Yr	Prior Yr	Ind. Norm
<i>Committed Loyalists</i>	_____%	_____%	_____%	_____%																						
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<i>Dissatisfied Compromisers</i>	_____%	_____%	_____%	_____%																						
	This Yr	Prior Yr	Prior Yr	Ind. Norm																						
Are there any surprises in the distribution of your Loyalty Matrix?																										
What stands out for you from the overall results?																										

Overall Employee Satisfaction and Loyalty Assessment (continued)

<p>What strikes you as positive in the findings?</p>	
<p>What strikes you as negative in the findings?</p>	
<p>If you had a magic wand, what would you do to make this organization an ideal place to work?</p>	
<p>What would your organization need to do to get there?</p>	

To help start the Planning process, here are some thought starters:

The 4Cs	Current State	Desired Future State	What do we need to do to close the gap?
<p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This organization provides an appealing work environment • Senior leaders clearly articulate the organization's vision and goals • Job roles and responsibilities are clearly defined • All employees have interesting and challenging tasks among their job functions • Senior leaders, managers and immediate supervisors show evidence of effective leadership • All levels of leadership are accessible to employees and show respect for employees • We encourage innovation and use mistakes for learning • We conduct regular performance reviews • We have defined performance metrics • Employees have sufficient opportunities for training and development • Employees have a clear career path within this organization • Employees know where to find information about job openings within this organization • Employees receive effective coaching to improve their performance from their managers and supervisors • We comply with all safety regulations • Workloads are reasonable and evenly distributed throughout the organization • Employees are able to balance their work responsibilities with their personal commitments 			

The 4Cs	Current State	Desired Future State	What do we need to do to close the gap?
<p>Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall communications within this organization is effective • Communications between leaders and employees are effective • Communications between supervisors and employees are effective • Communications between departments are effective • Employees have a good understanding of organization goals and vision • Employees know what is expected of them • Employees' jobs are well-defined 			

The 4Cs	Current State	Desired Future State	What do we need to do to close the gap?
<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are willing to go above and beyond their call of duty to help this organization succeed • Employees have a sense of accomplishment from their jobs • Employees have the necessary resources to do their jobs to the best of their ability • Employees have sufficient training/ learning opportunities to perform their jobs well • We know why employees join this organization • We know why employees leave this organization • We have succession planning for senior leader, directors and managers • We have workforce planning in place • We regularly review our operations to ensure they efficiently support our employees 			

The 4Cs	Current State	Desired Future State	What do we need to do to close the gap?
<p>Compensation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our compensation is market competitive • We have an incentive/ bonus program that rewards performance • We regularly communicate our compensation philosophy to employees • Employees have a good understanding of how they are paid • We offer benefits that meet employees' diverse needs • Employees know where to go for information if they have questions about their benefits • To attract and retain talent, we regularly review our benefits offering and make adjustments if necessary 			